

## Boat Ramp Monitoring Program

### Background

In the spring of 2004, the Department of Conservation and Recreation launched the Boat Ramp Monitoring Program. This program was developed in response to the increasing spread of non-native aquatic invasive species (AIS) in the water bodies across the commonwealth. Non-native species are plants or animals from other parts of the region, country or world. When they are introduced to our water bodies, some species become invasive and may reproduce very rapidly, drive out native species and cause serious environmental harm. Infestations of AIS can cause a loss of biodiversity, a decrease in property values, and loss of recreation value.



AIS are spread in a variety of ways, but one of the main pathways is by boats, bait buckets and other gear. Plant fragments become tangled on boat motor, trailers and fishing gear and hitch rides from one water body to another. Several invasive species, such as the Asian Clam and Zebra Mussel, have a microscopic larval stage that can travel undetected in bait bucket and live well waters. Therefore, it is critical that boaters take the time to removal all plant fragments from their boat, trailer and other gear and empty bait buckets and live well water on dry land away from shore, before entering or leaving a water body.



### Program Goal

The goal of the boat ramp monitoring program is to educate boaters about AIS, to perform courtesy boat inspections, and to survey boaters about their awareness of AIS. Each season six ramp monitors are hired to work at busy public ramps on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Ramp monitors may be posted at a single ramp, or may rotate between two or three ramps. In the past four years (2004-2007), a total 22 ramps have been monitored and the combined results of these surveys are listed below.

### Overall Results

Since the inception of the program in 2004 there have been:

- 8035 surveys were collected
- 7689 boats were inspected
- 1431 boats were found transporting plant fragments
- 600 of the fragments were non-native (646 were native, 185 were not identifiable)

For a complete table of the all results, click [here](#).

Past season reports are on our website, click [here](#)

### Water Chestnut Pulling

During 2007, DCR ramp monitors, in addition to monitoring ramps, partnered with staff from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at the Silvio O. Conte Refuge (Sunderland, MA) to hand harvest invasive water chestnuts from water bodies in the Connecticut River watershed. During June and July three DCR Ramp Monitors alone hand pulled over total of **2 ½ tons of Water Chestnut!**



### Past Ramp Locations

Ashland Reservoir  
Big Pond  
Chebacco Lake  
Cheshire Reservoir  
Lake Cochituate  
Congamond Ponds  
Laurel Lake  
Long Pond (Freetown)  
Mashpee Lake  
Lake Onota  
Otis Reservoir

Pequot Pond  
Lake Pearl  
Pontoosuc Lake  
Quabog Pond  
Lake Quinsigamond  
Sabbatia Lake  
Wallum Lake  
Webster Lake  
Whitehall Reservoir  
Winnecunit Lake  
Lake Wyola

### 2008 Season

This season six ramp monitors will be placed at the following ramps:

- 1) Lake Cochituate - Lake Quinsigamond
- 2) Wallum Lake - Webster Lake - Whitehall Reservoir
- 3) Pontoosuc Reservoir - Lake Onota
- 4) Otis Reservoir - Congamond Ponds
- 5) Mashpee - Johns Pond.
- 6) Connecticut River ramps (Gill and Northampton)

**Note:** If you are interested in becoming a boat ramp monitor, visit the DCR website employment page for position postings.

### Volunteer Ramp Monitoring Program

If you live on a lake or pond that is not currently being monitored, you may want to consider starting a volunteer ramp monitoring program. DCR staff can provide training in plant identification, boat inspection techniques and can provide templates for informational brochures and surveys. If you are interested, please contact the DCR Lakes and Ponds Program or email [Michelle.robinson@state.ma.us](mailto:Michelle.robinson@state.ma.us)

